

NEW ZEALAND RODEO COWBOYS ASSN INC

William Jennings
Director Animal Welfare,
NZRCA
PO Box 52
Middlemarch 9067
New Zealand



animalwelfare@rodeonz.co.nz
www.rodeonz.co.nz

To: Regional Transport Committees
New Zealand

09 August 2024

Dear Committee Members,

The New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association (“NZRCA”) supports the New Zealand Equestrian Advocacy Network’s (“NZEAN”) initiative to amend the Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 to declare horses being ridden and driven (“Equestrians”) as vulnerable road users. This initiative is essential to develop and maintain safe roads for Equestrian road users.

Many roads were set out before cars, trucks, motorbikes, or any form of mechanically driven transport (“Vehicles”) existed, and the only users were pedestrians and Equestrians. Now Equestrians are the minority user (designated as “other road users” by Waka Kotahi) of roads with Vehicles dominating road use. Roads are now designed with zero consideration for Equestrian usage and safety. This needs to change and roading planners should consider Equestrian needs equally with other vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Equally important is driver education. There is little to know knowledge by many drivers about safely passing Equestrians. The NZTA merely provides guidance on its webpage which advises drivers to be polite to Equestrians. Local and national governments should do more to ensure drivers are educated about safely co-existing with Equestrians on roads.

The NZRCA has over 700 members. The membership is made up of people of all ages, and families, spread out around New Zealand. Many of these members, including children, use public roads to exercise their horses for the rodeo season; or as a place to simply ride their horses; or to get from point A to point B.

There are way too many close calls between Vehicles and Equestrians (e.g., vehicles traveling way to fast and way to close) on roads. Vehicles do not need to physically strike an Equestrian to cause an injury. Ideally, Equestrians would have options to avoid using roads altogether or to maintain a safe distance from vehicles, but this is not currently possible.

New Zealand legislation has failed over the last 100 or so years to evolve with Equestrian road usage.¹ Local and national governments’ failure to do anything (at least legislatively) over the last 100 years could (and have) result in catastrophic consequences for Equestrians and Vehicle drivers alike.

The NZRCA consider it is time for local and national governments to rectify this omission and legislate/regulate to make roads safer for Equestrian’s continued use of roads. NZEAN has suggested a way forward. The NZRCA considers that this is only the start and that there are many other long overdue measures that should be implemented to ensure Equestrians can use roads safely.

Kind Regards

William Jennings
Director Animal Welfare NZRCA

¹ In a recent Christchurch Press News Article “Riders make bid for more access, safety”, 14 April 2024, it was pointed out that New Zealand Transport Authority’s Road Strategy does not mention Equestrians at all and the only reference to Equestrians is advice is advice on its webpage to basically be polite